



MISSISSIPPI EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

HURRICANE KATRINA NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

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Jackson, Miss. – All major highways and interstates are open in Mississippi, except for U.S. 90 along the Gulf Coast. Motorists are encouraged not to travel just to sightsee and to be aware that local curfews are still in place in many affected areas. Also, because of lack of fuel and power in affected areas, the danger still exists that motorists could be stranded. Local roadblocks may be in place in certain areas. Law enforcement advice and directives should be followed. The Highway Patrol strongly encourages persons not to drive in the southern coastal counties unless absolutely necessary.

The city of Gulfport will only allow emergency personnel and public utility workers south of the railroad tracks at this time. The area is unsafe due to numerous gas leaks and downed electrical lines. Once problems in the area have been corrected, business owners and citizens who reside south of the railroad tracks will be allowed to visit their respective property with proper identification.

The American Red Cross has created the Family Links Hotline, which will aid individuals who are seeking loved ones and family members in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. The Family Registry can be accessed at www.redcross.org or by calling 1-877-LOVED-1S (568-3317). Concerned friends and family can register their loved ones and view the list of those already posted. Friends and family are encouraged to visit the list daily, because it is updated continuously.

The Cystic Fibrosis Foundation will make cystic fibrosis drugs available to all patients affected by the hurricane, regardless of their ability to pay. Patients who need medicines or specific information about where to go for care should call the foundation at 1-800-FIGHT-CF or visit www.cff.org.

BellSouth reports initially that 600,000 lines were out of service, but now approximately 365,000 lines have been restored. Approximately 1,422 employees are involved in service restoration and the number of employees will increase by 50 percent. Company representatives predict it could take four to six months before service is restored in severely impacted areas.

No damage assessments have been received from the Gulf Coast counties. Preliminary damage assessments that are reported from 38 counties include:

- Homes/mobile homes destroyed: 396.
- Homes/mobile homes with major damage: 2,865.
- Homes/mobile homes with minor damage: 13,444.
- Businesses destroyed: 20.
- Businesses with major or minor damage: 670.
- Agricultural buildings destroyed: 227.

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- Agricultural buildings with major or minor damage: 1,273.

The most current reports indicate a total of 382,167 meters without power. Reports from power companies are:

- Entergy reported 59,615 meters without service.
- Mississippi Power reported 119,910 meters without service.
- Electrical Power Associations of Mississippi reported 202,642 meters without service.
- Tennessee Valley Authority reported: all outages restored.

In Mississippi there are 120 American Red Cross shelters open with 15,362 evacuees. In other Southern states, there are now 679 Red Cross Shelters open with 229,000 evacuees.

The Mississippi Army National Guard now has 2,688 troops mobilized for the relief effort. Guard personnel from 19 other states totals 10,568 troops mobilized in Mississippi. Another 522 troops are expected to arrive tonight.

Donations hotlines are established and taking calls on donations, such as calls about cash donations, donated goods and services, volunteers and volunteer groups, as well as vendor inquiries about selling goods and services. Donations numbers are:

- Mississippi Donations Hotline: **1-866-230-8903**.
- Federal Emergency Management Agency Hurricane Katrina Donations Hotline: **1-800-440-6728**.
- Vendors interested in doing business with FEMA pertaining to Hurricane Katrina should check the online information website at: <http://www.fema.gov/>

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